



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/562,414	12/23/2005	Jean-Francois Ranjard	PSA0311329	5455
29980	7590	04/27/2009	EXAMINER	
NICOLAS E. SECKEL			WARTALOWICZ, PAUL A	
Patent Attorney			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
1250 Connecticut Avenue, NW Suite 700				1793
WASHINGTON, DC 20036				
			MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
			04/27/2009	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/562,414	Applicant(s) RANJARD ET AL.
	Examiner PAUL A. WARTALOWICZ	Art Unit 1793

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED. (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 December 2005.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-10 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-10 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date 12/23/05.
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 8-10 provide for the use of hydrogen, but, since the claim does not set forth any steps involved in the method/process, it is unclear what method/process applicant is intending to encompass. A claim is indefinite where it merely recites a use without any active, positive steps delimiting how this use is actually practiced.

Claim 8 recites the limitation "hydrogen" in line 2. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claims 8-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed recitation of a use, without setting forth any steps involved in the process, results in an improper definition of a process, i.e., results in a claim which is not a proper process claim under 35 U.S.C. 101. See for example *Ex parte Dunki*, 153 USPQ 678 (Bd.App. 1967) and *Clinical Products, Ltd. v. Brenner*, 255 F. Supp. 131, 149 USPQ 475 (D.D.C. 1966).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claims 1-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jorgensten et al. (US 2004/0052722) in view of Mazza et al. (US 2003/0118504).

Jorgensten teaches a method of producing hydrogen comprising reacting sodium borohydride and water, wherein the sodium borohydride is in a concentration of 33-37% and wherein the temperature of the reaction is about 120 °C [0007, 0009, 0035] wherein the hydrolysis reaction produces sodium borate [0030]. It appears that the borate solution is at 120 °C as formed by the hydrolysis reaction (this is the initial temperature). Additionally, it appears that at least a portion of the borohydride is converted to the borate such that the weight percent of sodium borate would encompass the range in claim 5.

Jorgensten fails to teach a method of cooling the lithium borate.

Mazza et al., however, teach a method of hydrogen generation from sodium borohydride [0029, 0030] wherein the by-product solution leaves the reactor is subjected to several (at least two) cooling steps [0046, 0047] for the purpose of solidifying part of the solidified borate from the recycle solution [0051].

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time applicant's invention was made to provide subjecting the by-product solution that leaves the reactor to several cooling steps [first cooling step lowers temperature to 25-55°C, 0047; second cooling step lowers temperature to 15-45°C, 0048; 0046] in Jorgensten in order to separate part of the solidified borate from the recycle solution [0051] as taught by Mazza et al.

Additionally, Mazza teaches that heat removal rate from the system is varied to optimize the actual concentrations, temperatures, and flow rates in the invention [0050].

Therefore, one of ordinary skill in the art would readily determine the rate at which heat is removed from the borate solution and the duration for which the solution is held at a particular temperature because it is known that the heat removal rate of the by-product stream is varied to optimize the actual concentrations, temperatures, and flow rates in the invention [0050] as taught by Mazza.

This teaching appears to meet the limitation of holding the holding temperature for a period of time between 1 second and 100 hours and the temperature range lying in the range of 1-100°C/min.

Additionally, it appears that claim 6 encompasses a value of 0% of soda, therefore the claim does not actually require that soda is present in the aqueous solution of sodium borate.

Regarding claims 8-10, Mazza et al. teach that the hydrogen produced may be supplied to any known use such as a fuel cell or a hydrogen internal combustion device [0029].

Additionally, it appears that the prior art teaches a substantially similar process as the claimed invention such that any advantages or properties resulting from the claimed process is inherently present in the prior art process.

Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jorgensten et al. (US 2004/0052722) in view of Mazza et al. (US 2003/0118504) and Hardee et al. (US 5167788).

Jorgensten teaches a method of making hydrogen as taught above in claim 1. If it is required that hydrogen is used in accordance with a use in claim 10, Hardee teaches heat treating metal with hydrogen (col. 4).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to heat treat metal with hydrogen (col. 4) in Jorgensten because it is known in the art to do so as taught by Hardee et al.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to PAUL A. WARTALOWICZ whose telephone number is (571)272-5957. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30-6 M-Th and 8:30-5 on Alternate Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Stanley Silverman can be reached on (571) 272-1358. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Paul Wartalowicz
April 18, 2009

/Stanley Silverman/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, AU 1793